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Review Article

Understanding the Language of Khoshal's Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Khushal Khan Khattak was a multifaceted personality—an eminent poet, philosopher, physician, hunter, politician, and freedom fighter. He is credited with authoring more than 300 books in both prose and poetry, though only around 20 are currently available. His writings reflect a life lived through both the sword and the pen, deeply engaged in the sociopolitical dynamics of his time. Initially an ally of the Mughal Empire, his imprisonment by the Mughals marked a turning point, transforming him into a fierce critic and resistor of their rule. This paper explores a lesser-known dimension of Khushal Khan's literary work: the language of his poetry, particularly its raw, erotic, and aggressive undertones that are often overlooked due to cultural sensitivities. The language he employed is considered by many scholars to be too explicit or informal, leading to its marginalization in academic discourse. This study aims to reveal this neglected aspect of Khushal Khan's poetic legacy and argue for its importance in understanding his full literary and ideological contributions.

KEYWORDS: *Poetry, Language of Resistance, Language of Aggression, Erotic Language.*

Introduction

Through the history, Afghanistan has been remained the most troubling region in entire Central and South Asia. It has been an area of invasion. The history of this region took a conspicuous change when a Mughal warrior Zahir-ud-Din Baber defeated Ibrahim Lodhi the then ruler of the subcontinent in the Battle field of Pani Pat in 1526 and became an independent ruler. The subcontinent remained under the sway of Mughal dynasty from 1526 to 1857 A.D. till the British occupied the throne of Delhi. During the Mughal reign, the Pashtoon popularity was under severe tyranny, but no Mughal ruler was succeeded in maintaining his complete authority in the area (Kamil, 1951).

Being the elder son, Khushal assumed the functions of Khattak Chief in 1641after the death of his father. Born in May-June 1613, Khushal, by then, was a smart and vibrant young man of 28 years; the best portion of life for an extraordinary person like Khushal to produce results of his own choice. During his childhood, Khushal was reported to have escaped accidental death narrowly on several occasions: his drowning in river Kabul at the age of six years just below his palace situated on the bank of the river, an attack of intense and unbreakable fever continuing for several days at a stretch, and an accidental fall of heavy stone from over a grassy roof of a verandah on his head due to which he suffered from fever at the age of eighteen when he was married and his bride was sitting near his bed were some of the few fatal episodes, he survived (Kamil, 1951).

The same year, King Shah Jehan confirmed Khushal Khan as the Khattak Chief and guardian of the king's highway from Attock to Peshawar. From 1641 to 1658 when there developed instability in the Mughal Empire

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due to war of ascension to the throne, Khushal faithfully and sincerely utilized his energy, wisdom, bravery and all his uncommon capabilities in the service of his Mughal masters. During this era, the wars with his Yusufzai counterparts, which his father had bequeathed to him continued; Khushal being an outspoken person refers to the real state of affairs. He says:

که له خپله حقیقته درته وایم زه ځایې یم د مغل نمک حلال

ka lə khpəla haqiqata dərta wāyəm zə ǰyí yəm də moghol namak halāl

English Translation: The fact is that from the very start I have been faithful and a loyal of Mughals (Mohmand, 1952).

Khushal sided with the former and successfully blocked the advances of the latter towards Kabul. Aurangzeb won the game and rose to the throne in July 1658 assuming the title of Abul Muzaffar Muhyuddin Alamgir Badsh-i-Ghazi. The new King initially was favorably inclined towards Khushal, and confirmed him in his Chieftainship. Khushal also continued to faithfully serve the Mughal interests. The King in the second accession of his reign announced the withdrawal of road toll on the transit of food grains and other articles. Khushal does not seem to have shown any adverse reaction against the toll withdrawal order. Meanwhile Baku Khan, the Yusufzai leader succeeded in winning the favour of the crown prince Darashukoh and deprived Kushal Khan of his Jagir consisting of Yusufzai area (Kamil, 1951).

After Yusufzai uprising against Aurangzeb, in 1672, the second Pakhtun uprising against the Mughals began. However, the 1672 resistance was so large that Aurangzeb found it extremely difficult to put an end to it. Darya Khan Afridi and Aimal Khan Mohmand headed the Pakhtun resistance in 1672. It's interesting to note that Khushal Khan fought with the Mughals during the well-known Landi Khana (Gharib Khana) catastrophe. Muhammad Amin's mother, sister, and daughter were arrested, but his wife killed herself. Khushal Khan was a bewildered individual from the moment of his release until that point, refusing to publicly oppose or accept any mansab from the Mughals. In 1673, Khushal Khan Khattak later joined the rebellion. He continued it till his death in 1689 following the passing of Aimal Khan and Darya Khan (Himayatullah).

The greatest Pashto poet, Mr. Khushal Khan Khatak, has been compared to the world's most renowned writers, and the similarities between their works have been thoroughly examined in this scholarly research article. The comparison begins with the ancient Greek writers and extends to the Russian author Leaf Thulsthoy; in particular, every facet of Mr. Khushal Khan Khatak's literary output has been compared to that of English author John Lock and German writer Leasing. Poshkin and Thistaysky are Russian authors. The article's abstract, preamble, aims, conclusion, argument, and references have all been added (Khan S. W., 2023).

Since Khushal Khan Khattak is regarded as the foundation of Afghan literature, many Eastern and Western academics have attacked his writings, pointing out the humanism in them (Osmani, A. H., & Hotak, M. K., 2023).

In order to understand Khushal Poetry it is recommended to know Khataks Dialect. The absence of standardized spelling is the primary problem with the Pashto writing system. For Pashto, two distinct writing systems coexist. Afghan Pashto is used in Afghanistan and appears to have been affected by Dari, whereas Yousufzaï is used in Pashto regions of Pakistan and is influenced by Urdu and English (Iqbal, M., Samad, A., & Ali, M).

Methodology

Data collection

This is qualitative research. The sources from which the data is Khoshal's poetry more frequently from *Armaghan E Khoshal*, Sayed Rasool Rasa work on Khoshal. The study will help us in showing many more distinct features of Khoshal's poetry whose poetry is regarded as guide for Pashtun people.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is a technique use to inspect a text by interpreting the diction, style,

structure, and in-depth meaning of the text.

In this method we examine a text, and make an educated supposition with reference from existed scholarly articles and books. Textual analysis is an easy way to study and interpret the content, structure, and deep meaning in the target literary text.

Textual analysis is a method that asses a researcher to understanding ideas present in the symbols or pictures of targeted texts to obtain data. In short words we can say about textual analysis that study and examination of all sorts of texts, a bird eye view reading rather than superficial. It is close reading of the text undividedly. One highlight specific context of the text. The researcher then notes down the key words, and raise question or controversies in the text. When the researcher answers question, a psychological shift occurs from reader to writer. Close reading is a type of textual analysis method. In a textual analysis the one should raise three different questions. What does the author want to say in the text? The second question is concern with the discourse, how does it is said and why does it is said? What is the aim writing this text? For example, if someone is doing textual analysis of a poem. so, one will try to find out the narrator before going deep into the narrative. Is the author keep the content bound to a specific group? The idea in the content should be compare with different concept of different time frame. All these questions raise in one mind would answer the to the question about purpose of the text written by a writer in specific timeframe.

Opposing the Mughul Empire

In 1663, Mahabat Khan, the Governor of Peshawar, respectful and friendly towards Khushal Khan was transferred to Deccan replaced by Sayyid Amir and one Abdur Rahim as his deputy (Kamil, 1951).

This was a turning point in Khushal's association with Mughals. The transfer of Mahabat Khan ultimately created hostile environment for Khushal as latter was a straightforward Sardar but Sayyid Amir was addicted to bribes. He expected that Khushal would provide him a share out of his toll collections but he refused to do so.

Khushal's arrest and subsequent imprisonment brought about a great change in his personality and thoughts and thereafter all the Mughal attempts to reclaim and elevate him and win over him back proved futile. Khushal had rejected Mughals once for all, and his decision was firm and final. Now Khushal was equally proud to declare:

په منصب پورې خوشال خټک نوکـــر وو
چې منصب ورځنې لاړشه اوس بادشاه دی

pə mansab pore khoshāl khatək nokar wo

če mansab wərǰəne lāṛ shə os bādshāh day

English translation: With status (Munsab), Khushal was a servant, now being free from that bondage, he is a king.

Khushal during his imprisonment had reached definite conclusions and decisions to which he remained committed during the rest of his life. He had lost trust in the Mughal's approach towards Pakhtoons. His views about his changed ideas find abundant place in his poetry.

He intently condemned the Mughal King Aurangzeb in the strongest possible words, his belief and describes his outward attachment to Islam as a tactic to deceive the masses. In Khushal's opinion he had no right to claim to be a genuine Muslim as he was the very person who killed his brothers and imprisoned and insulted his father for becoming king himself. Against Aurangzeb Khushal declares:

بله هیڅ لیدلــه نه شي په دا مینځ کې

یا مغل د مینځه ورک یا پښتون خوار

bəla hec lídəla nə ši pə dā manǰ ke

yā moǧol də manǰa wrək yā pəṣtun khwār

English translation: The options are only limited, either Mughals have to give way or the Pakhtoons to get lost (Kamil, 1951).

Opposing Aurangzeb resulted in Khans' imprisonment which he denounced it as illegal act. Khushal says:

په ناحق د اورنگـــزیب په بند بندي یم

خدای خــبردی په تهمت او پــه بهــتان

زه په ځان کې گناه نه وینم په خداي گو

ولــې نور خلــق خــبرې کا شــان شــان

pə nāhaq də awrangzeb pə band bandi yəm

xodāy khbar day pə tohmat aw pə bohtān

zə pə zān ke gonāh nə vinəm pə xodāy go

wale nor xaləq xabəre kā šān šān

English translation: I am for no fault of mine in Aurangzeb's prison. Only Allah knows on what grounds. I do not find any wrong in myself. But the people ascribe many reasons.

Khushal's arrest brought about a turning point in his life and thoughts, targets, and determination (Kamil, 1951).

Pashtun Nationalism

It may be pointed out that as far as Pakhtoon nationalism is concerned, it does not owe its existence to Khushal. He is the philosopher who merely made the concept of nationalism refined and transparent. Phakhtoons happen to be the first people in the subcontinent particularly and in the South Asia in general who had developed a sense of self-awareness who always fought and refought for self-survival, self- protection and' remained always involved in a lasting struggle for regaining their lost prestige and sovereign status in the Indian Subcontinent.

Khushal was a pragmatic, realist and equipped with sharp vision. He had his eyes on the strengths and weaknesses of Pakhtoon character. In his view Pakhtoons don't pay attention to details.

پښــتانه په عقل پوه څـه ناکــس دي

کـوټه سپي د قصابانو د جـــوس دي

بادشـــاهي یې د مغــل په زور بایلـه

د مغل د منصـــبونو په هـــوس دي
اوښ لــه باره ســره کور تــه ورغــلی
په اولجه د اوښ د غاړې د جرس دي

pəṣtānə pə aqəl poh cə nākas dí

koṭa spí də qasābāno də jawas dí

bādšāhí yə də moǧol pə zor bāyla

də moǧol də mansabuno pə hawas dí

ús lə bāra sara kor ta warağəlay

pə walja də úṣ də ǧāṛe də jaras dí

English translation: It is my concern for Pakhtoon honour which keeps me travelling through unpaved paths. We live in a society where there exists neither *Deen* (religion) nor a system. People are losing sense of shame and mutual regard and respect. This is time which requires sacrifices from Pakhtoons and see what they are doing. Pakhtoons without doubt are better than the Mughals but the tragedy is that they (Pakhtoons) lack wisdom and sagacity. They lost their own kingdom out of greed, just for the sake of having and collecting few Mughal coins and chairs. The unfortunate and short sighted Pakhtoons could not see a camel loaded with treasure and raced towards catching the bells ringing in the camel's neck.

Khushal says in few other verses:

د بهـــلول او شـــــــیرشـــاه خـــبرې اورم
چې په هـــند کې پښـــتانه وو بادشـــاهان
شـــپږاووه پیړۍ یې داســـې بادشـــاهي وه
چې په دوي پورې درست خلق وو حیران
یا هغه پښتانه نور وو او دا څـــه نـــور دي
یا د خـــــدای دی اوس داسې شان فرمان
کـــه توفـــیق د اتفـــاق پښـــــتانه مـــــومي
زوړ خوشـــال به دوباره شي په دا ځـــوان

də bahlol aw šeršāh xabəre āwrəm

če pə hend ke paṣtānə wo bādšāhān

špag wə peṛay ye dāse bādšāhí wa

če pə duy pore drəst xalq wo hayrān

yā haǧa pəṣtānə nor wo aw dā nor dí

yā də xodāy day os dāse šān farmān

ka tawfiq də etefāq pəṣtāna múmí

zoṛ xošāl ba dobāra ši pa dā ǰwan

English translation: Pakhtoons are better than Mughals in every respect but they lack unity. He digs out the past and reminds them that there was a time

> when India (Hindustan) was ruled by Pakhtoons. They ruled India for six or seven generations in such a beautiful and effective way which surprised the entire world but what now? It appears that the Pakhtoons then were either different from contemporary Pakhtoons or may be Almighty Allah wished them as such. Old Khushal will once again gain youth when Pakhtoons ever become united. (Khan)

He Imam (leader) of Namgyal's expired there at Dambara angry and annoyed all alone while he breathed his last. No son or brother at his side in the desert. Either his *Rabb* (God) knows or I am informed about the treatment he received from his people (H. Khalil, 2001).

His sons with the help of his host Afridis brought his body to Esori Bala mount, a settlement at four kilometers in the South of Serai Akora, the present Akora Khattak where he was laid to rest far away from the rising dust of the Mughal horses. This was Khushal's last will that he should be buried in a place far away where the dust of Mughal horses could not reach. And there is his resting place beneath a tiny tomb.

His Love for Ordinary Life

زه د شـــعر په کار هیڅ نه یم خوښ
ولې خداي مې کړه په غـاړه دا مـقال
رنګ زما د شعر هیڅ سره ساز نه دی
لکــه سپی راپسې ګـرځي په دنـبال

zə də šer pə kār hec nə yam xwaṣ

wale xodāy me kṛa pə ğāṛa dā maqāl

rang zəmā də šer hec sara sāz nə day

ləka spay rāpəse gərǰí pə donbāl

> English translation: I am not pleased with writing poetry, But God gave me the potential. My personality doesn't suit poetry, But Poetry follows me like a dog (Rasa, 2009).

Bare Language

Khan is mostly known as poet, freedom fighter against the Muhghul Empire and a Pashtun Elder who wrote much about his poetry about war. He also wrote poetry about his desires for beauty and ordinary life. One of these ordinary life activities are adoring beauty and physical sex. Here, he perhaps thought that his people will not understand if he goes formal and that he used explicit language to describe about his love for his ordinary life and most importantly sexual life. As he says:

د زړې ښځې صحبت دی لکه زهر هر سړی د ځنې وکاندې حــذر
د هغې ښځې صحبت لکه دارو دی چې نه لور نه وی زوولی یا پسـر

də zaṛe ṣəǰe sohbat day ləka zahər -- har saṛay de ǰəne wəkāndí hazar

də haǧe ṣəǰe sohbat ləka dārú day -- če nə lúr nə wi zowalay yā pesar

> English translation: accompanying with old lady is poisoning- every man shall avoid doing it. befriended with a woman is soul calming- who has made no kid so far (Rasa, 2009).

عـمر ډېـر و عـقل لـږ و عـمر لږ شو عقل ډېر شو
یو ژوندون و په جـهان کې په دا شان سـره تېرېږ شـو
د ځوانۍ ساعت خوشحاله خوب و ولیده شو تېر شو

omər ḍer wo aqəl ləẓ wo -- omər laẓ šo aqəl ḍer šo

yaw žwandún wo pə jahān ke -- pə dā šān sara ter ber šo

də ǰwānəy sāçat xošāla -- xob wo wəlídə šo ter šo

English translation: I had life but no wisdom - life passes wisdom got enriched. There was only one chance to live just passed, unfelt My youth, O! Khushal- it was just a dream-forgotten (Rasa, 2009)

Conclusion

Khushal did not put his pen and sword to rest till his death. According to D. M. Kamil Mohmand, Khushal will always live in the hearts of the people due to his valorous and scholarly deeds. He died but he inscribed indelible mark of bravery, courage, chivalry and as an experienced soldier. His name will be included in the multi-faceted personality in the pages of history.

He was a practical leader and his life was full of adventurism and struggles. Dr. Iqbal Naseem Khattak says: Khushal Khan Khattak did not keep his ideology aside from his poetry rather let them go side by side. His life is the true picture of his poetry and his poetry is an account of his life (Khan M. N.).

Raverty says that Khushal's nationalist poetry is highly appreciable and that is why he is considered as the national poet by Pakhtoons. George Margantiene says that I have been enjoying the poetry of Khushal for the last half century. Khushal is justified to claim for himself the status of Firdousi and Saadi (Major, 1981).

Olaf Caroe has beautifully analyzed that: All said, we must judge between two men, which voice is the more authentic; that of the king who killed his brother and imprisoned his father to reach the throne, and with all his genius and persistence, led an empire to corruption and decay or that of the warrior poet still kindle fire in the hearts of his compatriots (Caroe, 1964)'

Khushal was still active in Mughal employment when different Pakhtoon tribes were deeply involved in war of liberation from Mughal subjugation. And when Khushal was released in 1668 after remaining about five years behind bars in India, the stage for widespread and deadly wars against Mughals was already set under the leadership of Darya Khan Afridi and Aimal Khan Mohmand who from 1672 to 1676 devastated the Mughal armies in war after war and this was the period when Khushal appeared as Mughal's formidable enemy.

Khushal's nationalist poetry is being subjected to severe criticism by Pakhtoons themselves as well as non- Pakhtoons. His critics say that his nationalist poetry is a reaction against the disgrace to which he was subjected by Mughal authorities. But, his poetry about ordinary life is not to read and explored. In this paper, his bare language of his poetry is an effort to expose for almost first time. The bare language of his poetry perhaps was because of simplicity and directness. Khan perhaps understood that his people will understand if his language is clearer in details and that he spoke about it without feeling shy about it.

Some of his critics view his turnaround with suspicion and level different allegations against him. Khushal Khan and his elders, for example, were devoted Mughal employees, according to Khwaja Muhammad Sail. In the past, Khushal took pride in his work as a poet in addition to fighting for the Mughals against his fellow Pakhtuns. He was not anti-Mughal; his resistance to them was just short-lived. Sail claims that Pakhtuns were aware that Khushal's animosity with the Mughals was fictitious and short-lived, and that Khushal had cloaked his personal grievance in a national cause in order to win over the Pakhtuns (Sial, 2006).

According to Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, Khushal Khan took arm against the Mughals was neither for the Pakhtun cause, nor any national necessity made him to oppose them and nor did the desire to expel the Mughals from the Pakhtuns land guided him. He and his ancestors have remained loyal to the Mughals. Retaliation for personal grievances was the only cause of the ensuing rage. He incited the tribesmen against the Mughals by framing his personal protest and retaliation as a national one, leading to the pointless death of thousands of Pakhtuns who had no benefit to their homeland (Yusufi, 1973).

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